



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

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THE KIND OF OLD LANDMARKER I AM

(Fourth in a Series)

By Wayne Camp

I am the kind of *Old Landmarker* who believes in a truly local church and only in the local church. I believe that to be truly local, a church must assemble in *one place*. **Acts 2:1 . . . they were all with one accord in one place. 1 Corinthians 11:20 When ye come together therefore into one place . . . 1 Corinthians 14:23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place . . .**

I have set forth three witnesses (plus witnesses quoted by my witnesses) that show that this concept of the true New Testament type of ecclesia is a foundational principle of Old Landmarkism. That principle is clearly stated by my first witness. ***The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place.***

WITNESS 1: James Robinson Graves

“The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place.”

WITNESS 2: Elton Wilson

“How local is the local church? IT IS LOCAL ENOUGH TO ASSEMBLE. How local is the local church? IT IS LOCAL ENOUGH TO OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER.”

WITNESS 3: H. Boyce Taylor

“Our first reason for contending that the word *ekklesia* never means any thing but an organized and an assembling church is that the Lord Jesus, who is the author of the Book of Revelation, uses the word *ekklesia* 20 times in Revelation and every time He

uses it, He refers to a local organized and assembling church.”

And now I call my fourth witness.

WITNESS 4: Eld. Milburn Cockrell

“In order to have a church, baptized saints must come together in one place at the same time.” “Twenty times the word church is used in the singular number, and it points to a church which meets in a certain place.”

“If I can give a word a new meaning so as to fit my creed when the common meaning makes good sense, then I can change the entire Bible to suit my fancy and the next person can do the same!”

“Those who do not gather with the congregation are not a part of it. Having your name on a church roll does not make you a church member! You must assemble with the congregation to truly be a part of it in the New Testament sense.”

Let me quote extensively from the writings of this witness. In his book in which he searches for the universal church he writes,

Since the term “the universal, invisible church” is no where found in the New Testament, I must say that we do not have much to go on in our search. But in order to make sure the word church never has any meaning other than a local church, we must examine every passage in the New Testament on this important subject.

In order to discover the primary and literal meaning of the Greek word *ἐκκλησία* let us look

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carefully at its non-Christian usage in Acts 19. **"For the assembly (ἐκκλησία) was confused"** (Acts 19:32). Acts 19:39 says: **"It shall be determined in a lawful assembly" (ἐκκλησία)**. Acts 19:41 declares: **"He dismissed the assembly" (ἐκκλησία)**. Hence we see the competent scholars of the King James Version believed that the literal meaning of ἐκκλησία was "assembly." They did not translate it "the called out."

Therefore, the plural tolerates nothing but the local idea.

Twenty times the word church is used in the singular number, and it points to a church which meets in a certain place. These passages are as follows:

"The church which was at Jerusalem" (Acts 8:1).

"The church which was in Jerusalem" (Acts 11:22).

"The church that was in Antioch" (Acts 13:1).

"The church at Cenchrea" (Rom. 16:1).

"The church that is in their house" (Rom. 16:5).

"The church of God which is at Corinth" (I

Those who do not gather with the congregation are not a part of it. Having your name on a church roll does not make you a church member! You must assemble with the congregation to truly be a part of it in the New Testament sense. —Eld Milburn Cockrell—

Cor. 1:2).

"The church which is in his house" (Col. 4:15).

"The church of the Laodiceans" (Col. 4:16).

"The church of the Thessalonians" (I Thess. 1:1).

"The church of the Thessalonians" (II Thess. 1:1).

"The church in thy house" (Phile. 2).

"The church of Ephesus" (Rev. 2:1).

"The church in Smyrna" (Rev. 2:8).

"The church at Pergamos" (Rev. 2:12).

"The church in Thyatira" (Rev. 2:18).

"The church in Sardis" (Rev. 3:1).

"The church in Philadelphia" (Rev. 3:7).

"The church of the Laodiceans" (Rev. 3:14).

These verses most certainly refer to a local church, an assembly of people who meet in a given locality, a body of baptized believers. There is no such thing as a universal, invisible church which meets in a certain place. [Ed. Note: It should also be pointed out that there is no such thing as a

local church that meets in two or more places.] A church which gathers in a certain place is both local and visible. This leaves 55 more verses to consider.

Please note these words from

LOCATION IN THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT

In 23 other passages the word church is located in a certain place in the immediate context. These verses are as follows:

"The Lord added to the (Jerusalem) church" (Acts 2:47).

"Fear came upon all the (Jerusalem) church" (Acts 8:3).

"As for Saul, he made havock of the (Jerusalem) church" (Acts 8:3).

"His hands vex certain of the (Jerusalem) church" (Acts 12:1).

"But prayer was made without ceasing of the (Jerusalem) church" (Acts 12:5).

"And being brought on their way by the (Antioch) church" (Acts 15:3).

"They were received by the (Jerusalem) church" (Acts 15:4).

"He . . . saluted the (Jerusalem) church" (Acts 18:22).

"Called the elders of the (Ephesian) church" (Acts 20:17).

"The church that is in their house" (Rom. 16:5). The name of this church is uncertain, but it was local for it met in a house.

"Least esteemed in the (Corinthian) church" (I Cor. 6:4).

"Despise ye the church of God" (I Cor. 11:22). Paul called the Corinthian church by this title in I Corinthians 1:1.

"He that prophesieth edifieth the (Corinthian) church" (I Cor. 14:4).

"The (Corinthian) church may receive edifying" (I Cor. 14:5).

"The edifying of the (Corinthian) church" (I Cor. 14:12).

"In the (Corinthian) church I had rather speak" (I Cor. 14:19).

"Let him keep silence in the (Corinthian) church" (I Cor. 14:28).

"For women to speak in the (Corinthian) church" (I Cor. 14:35).

"Let not the (Ephesian) church be charged" (I Tim. 5:16).

"In the midst of the (Jerusalem) church will I sing praise unto thee" (Heb. 2:12).

"Thy charity before the (Ephesian) church" (III John 6).

"I wrote unto the (Ephesian) church" (III John 9).

"Casteth them out of the (Ephesian) church" (III John 10).

IN CONNECTION WITH COMING TOGETHER

We are now going on to consider the remaining 32 passages. Three times the word church is connected with a coming together. This precluded a universal, invisible church in the strongest possible manner. [Ed. Note: The "coming together" of a church also precludes the notion of a church which assembles in more than one place.] They also demonstrate what a church really is in the New Testament sense. These verses can mean nothing but a local, visible body of baptized believers.

First, consider Acts 11:26 which says: **"And it came to pass, that they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people."** The reference is to the church at Antioch. With this local, visible body of baptized believers Paul and Barnabas assembled themselves; they assembled with the assembly. We also see that the church is a place where people assemble to hear the Bible taught.

A church in the New Testament sense can be gathered together in one place. In this one place the things of God can be rehearsed. Such can never be said of some supposed universal, invisible church.

To use the word church of some ideal multitude who have never come together into one place is absurd. [Ed. Note: It is also absurd to use

the word church with reference to two or more groups that have never come together in one place but claim to be members of one and the same body.] Such a thing cannot be a church in the Biblical sense; it is only a mythical church, a church that is made to exist in religious minds out of theological necessity.

But in the New Testament "the whole church" is always used to refer to a local church.

The whole church here (I Cor 14:23) could be assembled into one place.

We have already seen that 92 out of the 115 times the word *ἐκκλησία* (church) occurs in the Greek New Testament it means a local body as well defined as the legislative assembly of a Greek Free City. This makes it certain that the local idea commonly and exclusively rules in the New Testament. Ninety-two verses out of 115 favor my position—a very strong argument in favor of the Landmark position. Unless there are good reasons contained in the Scriptures themselves to make the word have a new meaning, we must always understand the word church to refer to a local body of baptized believers.

If I can give a word a new meaning so as to fit my creed when the common meaning makes good sense, then I can change the entire Bible to suit my fancy and the next person can do the same!

A person could only tell of a personal offense to a local church of baptized believers.

These elders had a flock, a local assembly. They were to feed this church and keep heretics out of it (Acts 10:29). Such things could only be done in a local, visible body of baptized believers.

Next is I Corinthians 10:32 which declares: **"Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God."** The common meaning again makes good sense. At least two times Paul referred to the Corinthian church as **"the church of God"** (I Cor. 1:2; 11:22). It is

only logical and proper to believe he used the word church in the same sense here.

An objector will say, "But this is the church in the broadest sense, which embraces the whole number of the elect. This must be so for the passage speaks of Jews and Gentiles." This reasoning ignores the fact that many churches had both Jews and Gentiles in their membership. Also the offense mentioned in this verse was to individual Jews and Gentiles. Hence it must have referred to those living in the community where the Corinthian church was located.

This contention ignores the fact that Jesus only personally set apostles in one church, the first church known as the Jerusalem Church (Matt. 10:1-4; Acts 8:1).

The head of the church is locally and visibly present in Heaven at the Father's right hand.

Likewise, His body on earth is local and visible; otherwise, you have a visible Head and an invisible body—a monstrous thing, a spooky church!

Every local church in the apostolic age was the body of Christ in that place. The Corinthian Church was **"the body of Christ"** in the city of Corinth (I Cor. 12:27). The body in Ephesians 1:23; 4:4,12,16; 5:30 was the church body at Ephesus. Paul called the Ephesian Church **"a building fitly framed together"** (2:21), **"built together"** (2:2), and **"fitly joined together"** (4:16). Such togetherness can only be said of a local assembly of baptized believers. It cannot be said of some future church not yet joined together. Even so, the body in Colossians means the church at Colossae (1:1-2). All the body at Colossae was **"knit together"** (2:18), and they had all been **"buried with him in baptism"** (2:12).

According to Ephesians 4:4, **"There is one body"** as to kind in this gospel age. If it is the universal, invisible body, then there is no local and

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particular body. On the other hand, if it is the local body (a thing which harmonizes with the Bible's definition of the body of Christ in I Corinthians 12:27), then there is no such thing as a universal, invisible body. One must either give up the local church or the big church. There are no more two kinds of bodies of Christ than there are two kinds of faith or two kinds of God.

Only a true local church which holds to sound doctrine can be considered the pillar and ground of the truth.

The common sense impression made by reading texts in which the word church occurs and a critical examination of doubtful passages demonstrate the actual church of the New Testament is a local society and never anything but a local society. The real church of Christ is a local body, of a definite doctrinal constitution such as is indispensable (sic.) to the **"unity of the Spirit"** of which it is the embodiment. I believe this to be the teachings of the Holy Bible. I must stand upon these truths even if most of the world calls me a "misguided fanatic." (*In Search of the Universal, Invisible Church*, Milburn Cockrell, 1982, Pp. 2-3, 5-8, 9, 12, 14-15, 16, 20, 21, 23).

This was such conclusive evidence that a church, in the New Testament sense is local enough to assemble, in fact, must assemble in one place, that I have quoted a rather large portion of the book. Let me call your attention to two other statements in this lengthy quote. Bro. Cockrell affirmed that it is **"certain that the local idea commonly and exclusively rules in the New Testament."** I am of the same persuasion. Old Landmarkers are abundant in their affirmation of this truth. Since it is **"certain that the local idea commonly and exclusively rules in the New Testament,"** it seems to this Old Landmarker that the suggestion that the word "church" may be used to refer to an organization that has some members meeting in one city, state, or country, while other members meet in another city, state, or country is a mis-application of the word "church".

In the quote above, Bro. Cockrell also wrote, **"There are no more two kinds of bodies of Christ than there are two kinds of faith or two kinds of God."** Again, this statement confirms my

contention that a local church is a local church. It is a body of baptized believers who assemble in one place. Otherwise, one has more than one kind of body. Some bodies meet in only one locality. Others say they are a church but they have a divided body that meets in more than one locality. Clearly and obviously, this cannot be a church of the New Testament type.

Bro. Cockrell again affirms our contention that the New Testament kind of church is an assembly of baptized believers who assemble in one place. He wrote,

In order to have a church, baptized saints must come together in one place at the same time. It is written of the church at Jerusalem that **"they were all with one accord in one place"** (Acts 2:1). When Paul and Barnabas came to Antioch they **"gathered the church together"** (Acts 14:27). Paul wrote to the Corinthian church: **"When ye come together in the church . . . When ye come together therefore into one place"** (I Cor. 11:18, 20). In such a local institution when all the members are present in the service, they are called **"the whole church"** (Rom. 16:23). The assembly of the church at Jerusalem is called in Acts 15:22 **"the whole church."** (*The Baptist Examiner*, Milburn Cockrell, August 20, 1977, P. 3).

Note the very first sentence in this quotation, **"In order to have a church, baptized saints must come together in one place at the same time."** Let us see how that harmonizes with our previously called witnesses.

WITNESS 1: James Robinson Graves

"The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place."

WITNESS 2: Elton Wilson

"How local is the local church? IT IS LOCAL ENOUGH TO ASSEMBLE."

WITNESS 3: H. Boyce Taylor

"Our first reason for contending that the word ekklesia never means any thing but an organized and an assembling church is that the Lord Jesus, who is the author of the Book of Revelation, uses the word ekklesia"

20 times in Revelation and every time He uses it, He refers to a local organized and assembling church."

In an article called, "**How To Organize a Church**," preached by Bro. Milburn Cockrell on July 10, 1977, and published in *The Baptist Examiner* of August 20, 1977, Bro. Cockrell wrote,

A true church is more than a branch of another church. It is more than a religious body with authority. It is more than a group of disciples meeting together to preach and study the Bible. A church in the Bible sense is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His law, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word.

In order to have a church, baptized saints must come together in one place at the same time. It is written of the church at Jerusalem that **"they were all with one accord in one place"** (Acts 2:1). When Paul and Barnabas came to Antioch they **"gathered the church together"** (Acts 14:27). Paul wrote to the Corinthian church: **"When ye come together in the church . . . When ye come together therefore into one place"** (1 Cor. 11:18, 20). In such a local institution when all the members are present in the service, they are called **"the whole church"** (Rom. 16:23). The assembly of the church at Jerusalem is called in Acts 15:22 **"the whole church."**

Baptized believers must come together in a church state and be a habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:22). They are to be glued together in a union of spirits as if they were but one spirit. It is written of the Jerusalem Church:

"And the multitude_of ,them that believed were of one heart and of one soul" (Acts 4:32). **"The whole body"** must be **"fitly joined together and compacted"** (Eph. 4:16). The hearts of each member of the body of Christ must be knitted

"together in love" (Col. 2:2), and they are to **"keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"** (Eph. 4:13).

In an article on *The Government of the Church*, Bro. Cockrell wrote,

In the congregational form the governing power rests entirely with the people. This is sometimes called the independent or democratic form. All ecclesiastical power is exercised by each local church, assembled as a congregation and the decisions thus made in the individual church are subject to no reversal by any other religious body. The government is directed by the body acting together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. All enjoy an equality of rights in deciding matters, the majority bear rule and their vote is final. (*The Baptist Examiner*, August 28, 1976).

"In order to have a church, baptized saints must come together in one place at the same time."

—Eld. Milburn Cockrell—

Bro. Cockrell was writing on congregational rule as the Scriptural form of church government. Note this statement especially. **"All ecclesiastical power is exercised by each local church, assembled as a congregation."**

All Landmark Baptists whom I know, and many other Baptists as well, would fully agree with this statement. The thing that one should not miss is that this authority is exercised by **"each local church, assembled as a congregation."**

But, what if the church never assembles as a single congregation? As I have already pointed out in this study, there are what some call a local church that does not assemble as a single congregation. Part of the body assembles in one place, another part elsewhere. In some cases there are several body parts located and assembling in several different locations. Yet such churches say they believe in the local church. How can a church be local if it never assembles in one locality?

In Scripture, a church is likened to a human body, each member with his or her place and work. The passage is rather lengthy, therefore I give only a part of it. **1 Corinthians 12:24-27 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given**

more abundant honour to that part which lacked: 25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. 26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Paul says of the human body, **"God hath tempered the body together."** There is no way parts of a body in Arkansas, other parts of a body in Mexico, other parts in Brazil could ever function in any manner. It would definitely be a divided body, if one were to be so bold as to call it a body at all. **"God hath tempered the body together . . . Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."** Only a **"together"** body is really a body. If a human body must be "tempered together" to be a true human body of the kind God created, must not a church be a single body tempered together to be a true body of Christ?

If one were to argue that three assemblies meeting in three different places are actually one body, one assembly, one house of God, his argument is as flawed as were the infamous Dale Moody's arguments when he said all the various congregations meeting in Louisville composed the church and body of Christ in Louisville.

No divided body parts, be they human or ecclesiastical, can function as a body. To be a true body they must be **"tempered together."** Again, Bro. Cockrell wrote, "All ecclesiastical power is exercised by each local church, assembled as a congregation." But, does a part of a church meeting in one place with other parts meeting elsewhere, ever have authority to exercise?

In a very good article on church attendance, Bro. Cockrell dealt with the matter of the local nature of the church. He wrote in that article,

THE CHURCH A CONGREGATION

The word "church" means "an assembly". Of the Jerusalem Church it is written: **"The disciples were assembled together"** (John 20:19. In Acts 4:31 it is said that **"they were assembled together"**. When the church in Jerusalem corresponded with the church at Antioch about a doctrinal problem, they wrote: **"It seemed good unto us, being assembled . . ."** (Acts 15:25).

A church is a local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and

fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws and privileges invested in them by the Word of God. Those who do not gather with the congregation are not a part of it. Having your name on a church roll does not make you a church member! You must assemble with the congregation to truly be a part of it in the New Testament sense.

In the first paragraph of this exert from the article Bro. Cockrell emphasizes that a true New Testament type of ecclesia, as this editor has been arguing, is an assembly that truly assembles in a given locality. They assemble together. They assemble together in the only way a church can assemble together; they assemble together in **one locality.**

In the second paragraph above, Bro. Cockrell makes two important statements that fully support my contention that the members of a church must assemble with the church in its chosen locality. First, he wrote, **"Those who do not gather with the congregation are not a part of it."** This would certainly mitigate against the notion that a group of baptized believers assembling in another city or country could still be a part of the Pilgrims Hope Baptist Church which regularly assembles at 3084 Woodrow Street in Memphis, Tennessee. According to Bro. Cockrell, a group of baptized believers who regularly assemble in a city in the Philippines could never be a part of the church that assembles in Memphis for they never assemble with us. Note this statement again, **"Those who do not gather with the congregation are not a part of it."**

1. Bro. Cockrell further declared unequivocally, "You must assemble with the congregation to truly be a part of it in the New Testament sense." He did not say, "You *should* or *ought* to assemble with the congregation to be a part of it in the New Testament sense." He said, "You **MUST** assemble with the congregation to truly be a part of it in the New Testament sense." [Ed. **Note:** This statement means that those folks who have their names on a church roll but assemble somewhere other than where the church regularly assembles, are not a part of that church even though their names are on

its roll. This certainly means that those who are in a so-called "mission" which meets somewhere else and do not assemble with the church are not a part of their sponsoring church even if their name is on its roll.] (*The Berea Baptist Banner*, January 15, 1983, P. 7).

If this witness is correct he completely demolishes the notion that a "church" is a true New Testament type of ecclesia if it has two or three groups of baptized believers who regularly assemble in two or three localities. I say, "Amen!" to this witness. He confirms and affirms what that Old Landmarker, J. R. Graves, said when he wrote, "*The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place.*"

CONCLUSION

I want to conclude this article in a very simple manner. Here are statements made by this witness on the necessity of a church assembling in one single locality.

1. "In order to have a church, baptized saints must come together in one place at the same time."
2. "... it points to a church which meets in a certain place."
3. "... it points to a church which meets in a certain place. (This statement was made more than one time in different articles).
4. "... an assembly of people who meet in a given locality."
5. "A church in the New Testament sense can be gathered together in one place."
6. "Every local church in the apostolic age was the body of Christ in that place."
7. "In order to have a church, baptized saints must come together in one place at the same time."
8. "All ecclesiastical power is exercised by each local church, assembled as a congregation."
9. "Those who do not gather with the congregation are not a part of it. Having your name on a church roll does not make you a church member! You must assemble

with the congregation to truly be a part of it in the New Testament sense."

10. "I must stand upon these truths even if most of the world calls me a 'misguided fanatic'."

I too must stand upon these truths even if most of the world calls me a misguided fanatic, an idiot, or whatever, for I unashamedly say, "**THAT'S THE KIND OF OLD LANDMARKER I AM!!!**"

—Wayne Camp, Editor—

THAILAND MISSIONS REPORT

By Wayne Camp

On October 11, 2000, Bro. Bill Lee, Pastor of Central Baptist Church of Grenada, Mississippi, his wife Janice and I boarded a plane in Memphis, to begin a 40 hour trip to Chiang Mai, Thailand. In Ft. Worth, Texas, we were joined by Bro. James Green, Pastor of Landmark Baptist Church, Ft. Worth. From Ft. Worth we flew to Los Angeles International Airport. We then went to the Thailand Airlines check-in and got our boarding passes for Thai International Airlines for our flight to Bangkok, Thailand.

When we got to Bangkok we learned that Bro. Jack had only checked his luggage to Bangkok and had to go through customs. The three of us spent about four hours in rooms we were able to rent while Bro. Jack was in a chair in a boarding gate area.

We were re-united the next morning when we boarded our craft to fly on to Chiang Mai. We arrived there in the morning and were met at the airport by Bro. Anond Phoothaptim. Needless to say, in person and in this article I will refer to him as Bro. Anond or simply Anond.

AN EXPLANATION

I should explain that Bro. Anond is not a member of any church in the United States. Brethren Lee and Green went there four years ago, baptized a group of believers with whom Bro. Green and the church in Ft. Worth had had considerable connection through a brother sent over by Landmark Baptist Church. It is not necessary that I relate all the details for the purpose of this article. However, through this, the

first church was organized and Bro. Anond was a member of that assembly and remains a member to this day. This church sent him forth to do mission work among the La Hu and Li Su mountain tribes.

I want it clearly understood that we did not go over there to exert any kind of authority over anyone. The churches there are completely autonomous and none of us have any authority over them. In the last four years some 12 or 14 churches have been started through the mission work of Pa Sak church and their missionary, Bro. Anond. They have been assisted through Central and Landmark as well as other churches. There or other churches in Burma that have also been started or have been brought to grace and church truth through the visits of Brethren Lee and Green, and the faithful labors of Bro. Anond.

THE ANTIOCH OF THAILAND

I will come back to the trip in a later article but for this article I simply want to describe the great work that I believe is being done in Thailand. I wrote home to my people while there that the Pa Sak church reminds me a great deal of the church in Antioch that sent forth Paul and Barnabas and later Silas. Pa Sak is the oldest church in the group and they have sent out Bro. Anond and he maintains membership in that church. He has a rented house in Chiang Mai and owns a home in the village of Pa Sak. The Pa Sak church does not hold an iron hand over his work as some American churches do over their missionaries. He assembles with them quite regularly and on other Sundays he will be with other churches, or he may be in a village preaching the gospel where he feels there is the prospect of starting a new work. It is not unusual for representatives of other villages to come to a village where he is preaching and ask him, "Come to our village and preach the gospel and the right Bible doctrine." In fact, since we were there that has happened a couple of times.

Bro. Anond reminded me so much of the Apostle Paul. As Paul, he still has the care of all the churches on his heart and spends many hours working with them. Monthly, the pastors come to his home for a two-day visit during which they have classes two long days and nights, with the pastors sleeping on the floors in his house in Chiang Mai. Other times the pastors will gather at

his house in Pa Sak village for this training.

PERSECUTION

Like Paul and Barnabas, Bro. Anond has endured persecution. In 1997 an American missionary for the Nazarenes tried to kill him because the Landmark Baptist Church in Pa Sak was outgrowing the Nazarene church. They were renting a building from the Nazarene's in which to meet and they were kicked out. They then rented a house from a Buddhist and when some Buddhists were saved, they were kicked out there. By the way, Buddhists are rare among the villagers. Those who are not "Christian" usually worship evil spirits. On another occasion, he was told that if he returned to a village that is steeped in the worship of evil spirits that he would be killed. After about three months he was able to get back in and preach again.

The Pa Sak church now has 50 members with 25 families represented. Two young men about 20 years of age had recently been saved and were baptized while we were there. The church and pastor asked that one of us baptize them and Bro. Lee did it.

With the assistance of the Central Baptist Church, Grenada, Mississippi, and the Landmark Baptist Church, Ft. Worth, Texas, and other churches that support the work, the Pa Sak church was able to purchase seven acres (They had to buy that much to get it) in a beautiful location at the base of a rock cliff. The land has fruit trees on it and the members use it and sell the balance at roadside stands out on the highway. They constructed a building made of bamboo with a leaf roof. They have outgrown that building and have been breaking rocks out of the cliff and breaking them down to size to use in concrete for a floor in a new building. The church supports her pastor full time, saves 10% of her offerings for the new building and helps other churches as they are able. Their new building will be constructed of wood and masonry. The concrete for the floor will be mixed on the site from Portland cement and sand that will be hauled in and the rocks which are being broken with hammers by the members. The beams to support the roof will be cut in the jungle and hewn by hand into about 12" X 12" beams for main supports and smaller sizes where needed. The roof will be of corrugated concrete-fiberglass sheets. Money was

left this year to help on the construction and progress is being made.

In this article I am focusing on the first church more than others so that you will get an idea of the foundation of this work. The pastor is a very stable and meek brother and well-respected among the churches, it seems.

At this church, as at several others we gave out Bibles to some in the membership who did not have them. Also, we presented some hymnbooks. In these churches, each member is responsible for his own hymnbook and since it may take as much or more than a day's earnings to buy a Bible or a hymnbook, they cannot often buy them on their own so we purchased Bibles in Chiang Mai and gave them out in the various churches.

Dear Readers, these are not city churches. We traveled into the jungle on roads that were sometimes mere paths through the jungle. Our Nissan jeep-like vehicles often were in low ratio and in first gear for miles as we traveled. We even had to take one of the vehicles back to the rental agency and get one with a larger engine to make one trip for one that we were using could not run the air conditioner and pull the inclines we were making on the trips.

These La Hu and Li Su people are very receptive to truth. One of the highlights of the trip for this editor happened at Pang Tong Eh village. The church building there was a roof and posts. The members and visitors sat on a plastic tarpaulin while I preached. I had awakened that morning at 5:00 AM with a sermon on my mind that I called ***Why I Am a Landmark Baptist***. I got up and prepared some notes and preached it at the Pang Tong Eh church. As I was preaching, my back was to a house and a man was on the porch listening. Bro. Anond had spoken to him several times about Baptist Doctrine but he had been unable to see the importance of the doctrine. At the close of the service, this man spoke out rather loudly to get Bro. Anond's attention. Bro. Anond told us that he said, "Amen! I see! I see!"

A PRESSING NEED

How does Bro. Anond get to these villages and do this work? He sometimes rents a vehicle and travels to them. On other occasions his brother, who has a pickup takes him, but he has a job in Chiang Mai and cannot always take him. At times Bro. Anond will ride a Thailand Taxi for 3 or 4 hours (A Thai taxi is a pickup truck with a metal cover over the bed but is open on the sides) then

walk from the highway into the jungle to the villages. On other occasions he rents or borrows a motorbike to make the trip. Yet, in spite of these difficulties, he is in three or four villages some weeks preaching the gospel and further establishing in the faith the already organized churches.

By the time you receive this paper, I will have written out letters to a number of churches asking for help in purchasing a vehicle for Bro. Anond. This is one of the most pressing needs of this work. It is not the only need but is very urgent.

Pilgrims Hope Baptist Church has taken on the project of raising about \$10,000 to buy him a jeep-like 4-wheel drive vehicle to be used in the work. We have contributed the first \$1,000 and hope our sister churches will be willing to assist us in raising the balance. The church has also agreed to send me back to Thailand in March, 2001, for a two-week teaching trip and while there I will be purchasing the vehicle to give to Bro. Anond to facilitate his travels. He is on the go constantly. I receive e-mail from him on Monday, usually. And he is usually just getting back from a visit to one or more of the churches and preparing to go to another. If the church is building a building, he goes and works on that. He preaches in any village that he can whether we have a church there or not. He takes medicine when he has the money to purchase it. Central Baptist Church of Grenada and Pilgrims Hope Baptist Church recently purchased a pickup truck load of blankets that he has distributed among the church members in the various churches.

At least once each quarter, he travels into Burma and preaches to several churches that have been started there. He often takes his own money and buys for the people in the churches when they have needs. Frankly, I do not see how he does what he does, especially the way he has to travel.

This brother is a licensed architect and engineer. We ate at one of the finest restaurants in Chiang Mai that he designed several years ago. We saw other buildings that he designed. He could be making several times his present income in that field but he has given it up to be full-time in this mission work. He did not even have a refrigerator in his home until one was purchased for him this year while we were there.

I guess what I want you to say is that this man is not raking in the several thousands of dollars

monthly that some missionaries are, but I venture to say he is doing as much as any two missionaries I know.

If any of you pastors who are reading this and may not receive a letter from our church would like to assist us in buying this vehicle, please send your offering designated for the vehicle to the following address:

Pilgrims Hope Baptist Church
3084 Woodrow Street
Memphis, TN 38127

If you would like to assist in the work in other ways, feel free to contact Bro. Bill Lee of Grenada, MS, Bro. Jack Green of Ft. Worth, TX, or Bro. Wayne Camp. We will be glad to give you any information we can and make suggestions about needs. Next issue I will try to list some of the most pressing needs of the work.

—Wayne Camp—

Bouquets and Brickbats

“I DON’T DO CHRISTMAS; I DO BELIEVE IN THE VIRGIN BIRTH” DOMINATES BOUQUETS AND BATS THIS MONTH.

[Editor’s Note: I do not know what triggered such an outpouring of support and opposition for our online article on Christmas this year. I have decided to share some of those with you but restrictions of space will not allow the printing of all received responses.]

TENNESSEE: In my studies over the past couple years I do believe xmas to be pagan. So, the last couple years I have abandoned it completely. It has been my conviction that many of popular doctrines such as the keeping of sunday in place of the Sabbath leads back to catholic origins which stem from baal worship. Though we may find ourselves in the minority in our convictions, I am thankful that God made it clear in His word as how we should approach Him in worship. Outside of genuine ignorance, I do believe these things matter to our Lord. God bless you in your studies.

WWW: You seem intelligent but you go off on a wild tangent. Of course Christmas originated with the Catholic church. Do you not know that there was/were no Protestant church(es) in the fourth century?

And of course Christmas coincided with a

pagan holiday. It was the common practice of early Christians to co-opt pagan holidays. People enjoy holidays. How can you ask pagans to become Christians by taking away something that they enjoy? The most logical thing to do is to keep the joyful part and substitute a good Christian reason for celebrating. And that is exactly what those early Christians did. Would you rather have them still worshipping the Sun God, than the Son God?

But you seem to be so prideful about your own understanding of history and the Bible that you are blind to logic and the truth. Pride, may I remind you, was the first sin.

And your first sin leads to your second sin, hatred. Your own words about Catholicism are bubbling over with hatred. Didn't Jesus say that one of the two great commandments was "to love one another?"

Regardless of your disagreement with Catholicism, you have no right as a Christian to express such hatred to such a large group of people (to even one person, really). I'm not saying you should agree with them, but haven't you ever heard of disagreeing without being disagreeable?

I pray that you follow all of the teachings of Jesus, not just the ones that suit your arguments.

TEXAS: RE: Christmas: Thank you !! this is what our pastor, Kirby Jon Caldwell, has been preaching for the past few weeks. it will take some time for even some of the faithful to follow this, but, that's life. thank you. our church is Windsor Village UMC, in Houston, Texas. (our pastor gave a speech at the republican national convention extolling Gov. Bush's accomplishments in Texas. don't hold it against him !!) may GOD bless you, and peace unto you.

For years I felt out of place by not wanting to celebrate holidays. 1st because I worked a great deal of them, my family only cared what they could get out of them. Then I realized that these man made days off are mostly (social) to gain money, gifts and etc. Many say it brings the family together. I say if you cant bring your family together at other times of the year or give gifts of appreciation during the year without being told what days to give then it means nothing. May God Bless You.

WWW: After visiting your web page about Christmas and the virgin birth I had to respond. I understand

your reasons for not celebrating Christmas you said a mouth full. I wish I had time to say all I want to say but I will not go into it now. I just want to ask you something concerning Jesus being born from virgin Mary. With all due respect, How were you brought into the world? Your parents conceived you I'm pretty sure. If you have children how did they come into the world? You had to have conceived them with your wife. So what I am trying to say is, how is it biologically, mathematically, genetically possible for a woman to have a child without the intervention of a man such as yourself? If Joseph wasn't Jesus' father then that means God broke his promise that Jesus would come from the seed of David. Joseph was a descendant of David. By Joseph being a descendant of David and Jesus' father that fulfills God's promise to Abraham. How can God break that promise? Then we are calling God a liar. I do want to say one more thing. I believe Mary more than likely was a virgin before she and Joseph conceived Jesus. That's the only way I can make sense out of Jesus being born of a virgin. Thank you for your time.

EDITOR'S ANSWER:

Dear _____,

Mary was also a descendant of David so the problem you suggested is non-existent. The

conception of Jesus was miraculous and nothing is too hard for God. I believe Jeremiah is making reference to the virgin birth when he writes, "How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man." Jer. 31:22

Paul also alludes to the virgin birth when he speaks of Christ being made of a woman. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law."

He is the seed of the woman. Gen. 4:4 "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Your concern that the doctrine of the virgin birth makes God a liar is without foundation. I believe that your denial of the virgin birth makes God a liar.

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore will the Lord himself give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and shall bring forth a son, and call his name Immanuel.

Matthew 1:23 Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, 'God with us.'

Tabia, note that it is a virgin that shall be with child. Not a former virgin, but a virgin.

This is evident from Mary's words when she was told of the coming birth of Christ. **Luke 1:34 But Mary said to the angel, How shall this be, since I know not a man?**

When Joseph learned of Mary's pregnancy with Jesus, he was minded to put her away privately and not publicly shame her. Joseph knew he had never engaged in marital relations with Mary so he knew it was not his child she carried.

Matthew 1:19-21 19 But Joseph, her husband, being a righteous man, and unwilling to expose her publicly, purposed to have put her away secretly; 20 but while he pondered on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, fear not to take to thee Mary, thy wife, for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.

Though you think it was Joseph's biological son, Joseph did not think he (Jesus) was his biological son and the angel of the Lord told him that the conception was not of man but through a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit.

I hope this will help you.

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